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THESIS

NAVY CAREERS AND ADULT DEVELOPMENT

by

Robert C. Siverling

December 1983

Thesis Advisor: Roger D. Evered

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SECURITY CLASSIFICATION OF THIS PAGE (When Data Entered)

REPORT DOCUMENTATION PAGE		READ INSTRUCTIONS BEFORE COMPLETING FORM
1. REPORT NUMBER	2. GOVT ACCESSION NO.	3. RECIPIENT'S CATALOG NUMBER
4. TITLE (and Subtitle) Navy Careers and Adult Development		5. TYPE OF REPORT & PERIOD COVERED Master's Thesis December 1983 6. PERFORMING ORG. REPORT NUMBER
7. AUTHOR(s) Robert C. Siverling		8. CONTRACT OR GRANT NUMBER(s)
9. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION NAME AND ADDRESS Naval Postgraduate School Monterey, California 93943		10. PROGRAM ELEMENT, PROJECT, TASK AREA & WORK UNIT NUMBERS
11. CONTROLLING OFFICE NAME AND ADDRESS Naval Postgraduate School Monterey, California 93943		12. REPORT DATE December 1983 13. NUMBER OF PAGES 95
14. MONITORING AGENCY NAME & ADDRESS(if different from Controlling Office)		15. SECURITY CLASS. (of this report) Unclassified 15a. DECLASSIFICATION/DOWNGRADING SCHEDULE

16. DISTRIBUTION STATEMENT (of this Report)

Approved for public release; distribution unlimited.

17. DISTRIBUTION STATEMENT (of the abstract entered in Block 20, if different from Report)

18. SUPPLEMENTARY NOTES

19. KEY WORDS (Continue on reverse side if necessary and identify by block number)

Surface line careers
Career patterns
Adult development

20. ABSTRACT (Continue on reverse side if necessary and identify by block number)

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S/N 0102-LF-014-6601

SECURITY CLASSIFICATION OF THIS PAGE (When Data Entered)

20. ABSTRACT (Continued)

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Navy Careers and Adult Development

by

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Submitted in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of

MASTER OF SCIENCE IN MANAGEMENT

from the

NAVAL POSTGRADUATE SCHOOL
December 1983

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ABSTRACT

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I. INTRODUCTION

In 1976 Gail Sheehy published Passages, which immediately became a national best-seller. The central thesis of her book is that adults have predictable crises in the course of their lives, and that adults, like children, have stages they must go through and come to terms with. The wide response the book received may be more than the typical American reaction to the latest fad in self-help. The response suggests a broadly-based recognition of the basic proposition that adults go through stages of development.

Sheehy's book taps a long, rich tradition that spans many centuries. Shakespeare talked about the seven ages of man, letting Jaques in As You Like It tell us of man's progress from "mewling and puking" infant through school-boy, lover, soldier, and justice. Finally he slips into his dotage and eventually "last scene of all,/That ends this strange eventful history,/Is second childishness and mere oblivion..." Dante opened the Divine Comedy by describing himself: "Midway this life we're bound upon,/I woke to find myself in a dark wood,/Where the right road was wholly lost and gone." This is as good a description of the mid-life crisis as any.

The idea that adults may have stages in their life development was given formal legitimacy by Erik Erikson in his

book, Childhood and Society, first published in 1950. In that work Erikson proposed that there are eight stages in life, three of them in the "adult" period. Erikson's lead has been subsequently followed by considerable research in the field of adult development. Longitudinal studies have tested the idea and psychologists have elaborated Erikson's simple eight-stage model.

If the underlying ideas of the life cycle theorists are true, then there may be implications for policy-makers and career planners when they design or change organizations. There may be, for example, opportunity to design organizations that facilitate the growth of an individual through the development stages of his life, or at least do not hinder such development. Similarly, wide-spread use of a development model for a career would give persons participating in such a system a handy check on their progress. In addition to relieving anxieties, it might also serve an individual as an early warning sign of a stalled career or a failing relationship.

Stability and orderliness in career patterns and adult development can also have stifling implications. Perhaps part of the attraction of many systems of personnel management may actually be their imprecision. They may be fuzzy enough to permit the truly outstanding person to manipulate the system and achieve greater results than might be possible under a more all-encompassing regime.

This paper examines the implications of life cycle development theories for Navy career patterns. In particular, it is concerned with the relationship of adult development and the Navy career path. What is the effect of the Navy career on the development of people who choose it? What constraints are placed on an individual's growth in the course of his/her life? What effects on the family cycle can be laid to the Navy's career patterns? Are there ways in which the Navy reinforces the crisis points in adult development? Are there ways in which the Navy eases development?

These and similar questions are examined through the prism of a subset of Navy personnel--junior and mid-grade surface warfare officers, and senior officers of the line and staff corps. The junior group was chosen because it represents about a third of the Navy's line officers, has a well-defined career path spelled out in official documents and is familiar to the author. The senior group of officers was chosen primarily for convenience in data-gathering, since a sampling of officers of the rank of Captain in the surface line was difficult to gather.

A few words are in order about what this paper is <u>not</u>. First, the research conducted and reported here is by no means exhaustive. Only a small portion of the Navy's officer corps has been sampled. Other warfare specialties and staff corps branches have unique career patterns and

unique needs. Direct comparison with other communities is therefore questionable. However, career patterns follow similar basic designs and the surface warfare career pattern is a good paradigm for the others.

Second, the research, the conclusions, and the policy implications drawn apply only to officers. There is no doubt that enlisted men and women occupy an important part of the Navy's personnel management effort. However, the development theories researched for this paper and the surveys reported here were limited to the officer community, since it is comparable to the white collar community for which the development models are designed. Although Daniel Levinson addresses blue collar workers, all other developmental theories ignore the problems of non-white collar workers. This failing is a serious challenge to the universality of these theories.

Third, this paper disregards the influence, even the existence, of female officers. Sexual bias is not intended. Like the blue collar worker, women are ignored by the developmental theorists, at least to this point. To try to apply development theories and the findings of this paper to women would be unjustified.

This essay is written from a distinct point of view that becomes especially evident when considering the implications of the findings. The author's preference is for a system of personnel management that accords individuals room for

growth, fulfillment, and personal and career satisfaction while at the same time serving the needs of the organization.

But before the implications of adult development can be examined, there must be some idea of what they are. Section two of this paper summarizes some of these models and their intellectual antecedents. A short critique and a comparison of the models is presented.

Published documents provide one angle of vision for examining the Naval officer's career in the next section. Interviews of officers participating in the system itself provide another. Results of a review of the published career planning guidebook are presented along with some propositions about people's reactions to the career pattern laid out. Interviews attempted to verify these propositions and results are reported.

Conclusions about career patterns, the officer's reactions, and policy implications are the subjects of the final two sections.

II. IDEAS OF LIFE STAGES

The idea that development continues throughout adult life has ancient roots. Shakespeare talked of the eight ages of man and the Bible tells us there is a season to all things. But the modern idea of adult development and one of the most influential formulations was spelled out in Erik Erikson's book Childhood and Society (1950). Erikson laid the foundations for the psychological basis of adult development, a field which has culminated in Daniel Levinson's The Seasons of a Man's Life (1979) and Roger Gould's Transformations (1978).

In addition to psychological studies there is a career dimension to the life cycle, especially for men and increasingly for women as well. The shape and nature of the typical career is discussed by a number of authors in the organization development field. Edgar Schein in Career Dynamics (1978) provides a succinct summary.

Finally, there is a family, or social, dimension to development which, while not as clearcut as the others, interacts in various ways by reinforcing some influences and cancelling others. This section reviews some of the literature from each of these fields, following Schein's division of these theories into psychological, career, and family categories.

A. PSYCHOLOGICAL THEORIES OF DEVELOPMENT

In Childhood and Society Erik Erikson broke new ground by proposing that development continued throughout adult life. He defined eight ages of man, five childhood and three adult stages. Since Erikson's philosophic outlook is dualistic, he sees the questions of the last three stages of life in terms of resolution of opposites.

His first adult stage is the resolution of the conflict between intimacy and isolation in the young adult. In this stage the person tests his recently-developed sense of the self and attempts to fuse his identity with that of another. The culmination of this stage is the achievement of full genitality--an ability to love and to merge with another human being in a satisfying, satisfactory sexual way. "Satisfactory sex relations thus make sex less obsessive, overcompensation less necessary, sadistic controls superfluous." (Erikson, 1963, p. 265)

Only with resolution of the issue of intimacy versus isolation can the adult continue to the next stage of development, in which the major conflict is generativity versus stagnation. Erikson sees this stage as the central one:

> "In this book the emphasis is on childhood stages, otherwise the section on generativity would of necessity be the central one, for this term encompasses the evolutionary development which has made man the teaching and instituting as well as the learning animal." (Erikson, p. 266)

This phase of adult development occupies the majority of men's lives and "is an essential stage on the psychosexual and well as on the psychosocial schedule." (Erikson, p. 267) Unfortunately, Erikson does not expand on his theme. The brief section in Childhood and Society devoted to generativity is a paean to its achievement but little else. He points out what happens if the conflict is not resolved: "where such enrichment fails altogether, regression into an obsessive need for pseudo-intimacy takes place, often with a pervading sense of stagnation and personal impoverishment." (p. 267) But the details--how generativity is to be arrived at, what trials and traumas are associated with its achievement--are left to another time.

The final stage of life is occupied with the conflict between despair and ego integrity. Once again, we are treated to some fine writing but little of substance in Erikson's treatment of the final stage of life. As he himself acknowledges, he lacks a clear definition of ego integrity, and instead must "point to a few constituents of this state of mind." (p. 268) His description emphasizes peace and unity, orderliness and harmony with what has been achieved in one's life and an acceptance of the facts. The alternative is despair and fear of death:

> "The one and only life cycle is not accepted as the ultimate of life. Despair emphasizes the feeling that the time is now short, too short for the attempt to start another life and to try out alternate roads to integrity." (Erikson, p. 268)

Erikson pointed a way and charted the outlines of unexplored territory, but it was left to others to fill in the details. Among his chief successors are George Vaillant, Roger Gould, and Daniel Levinson. Although they have worked independently, their work forms a canon of adult development.

Vaillant's book, Adaptation to Life (1977), describes some of the results of the Grant Study, a long-term longitudinal study of college graduates of a prestigious Eastern university. Throughout his report of the Grant Study men at age 50, Vaillant affirms the general outline laid out by Erikson, finding that there is in fact support for the stages of life Erikson proposed. Vaillant suggests they are roughly linked to age--there seems to be a transition in each decade of adult life.

Vaillant is careful to point out the limitations of his study: restricted to men, it concentrates on a narrowly circumscribed sample of privileged white lower and upper middle class men. Yet for all its cultural selectivity, the Grant study has distinct value because it isolates many of the variables that might otherwise affect these men's lives. Vaillant argues persuasively that "the full life cycle can unfold only when humans are provided both the freedom and the opportunity to mature." (Vaillant, 1977, p. 202) Following John Clausen, he goes on to identify four major variables that affect the life cycle:

1. available opportunities, or obstacles encountered as a result of objective factors like race, sex, etc.

2. effort that the individual himself makes.

3. support systems available to the person.

4. resources within the individual.

Within the Grant study, the first two variables are held constant:

> "...the Grant Study men had an equal chance in life: white, male, American, well-educated, they each had entree into their culture's power elite...they were all hard workers and achievers; they were all chosen for their adolescent willingness to invest in their own growth and development." (Vaillant, p. 203)

Given the caveats outlined above, Vaillant found that his subjects conformed to the major adult themes Erikson outlined. Almost uniformly they had gone through some kind of transition period in their forties, a period marked by a turning from concerns about career and intimacy to more abstract and universal causes. Vaillant does a better job of describing what he means by generativity than does Erikson. Nevertheless, he never offers a clear succinct definition. The factors listed below seem to be part of his definition:

1. a concern for and acceptance of responsibility for people outside the family circle.

2. an outwardly-directed attitude about people and a concern for them rather than for objects.

3. an open attitude toward growth and change in jobs, personal life, and the world generally.

These concerns contrast with those of the preceding stage, that of establishing intimacy. In this stage

Vaillant finds the major focus of life is the self and the nuclear family:

> "From age twenty-five to thirty-five they tended to work hard, to consolidate their careers, and to devote themselves to the nuclear family. Poor at self-reflection, they were not unlike grammar school children; they were good at tasks, careful to follow the rules, anxious for promotion, and willing to accept all aspects of the system." (Vaillant, p. 216)

The change from one stage to another is marked by a transition period. Vaillant argues that the "mid-life crisis" is too focussed and shrill a phrase:

> "Divorce, job disenchantment, and depression occur with roughly equal frequency throughout the adult life cycle. If such events occur during the dangerous, exciting, ripening forties, we can pause and say 'Ah-ha! The mid-life crisis, the dirty forties, menopausal depression!' But that is to miss the point. Progression in the life cycle necessitates growth and change; but crisis is the exception, not the rule." (Vaillant, p. 268)

Good scientist that he is, Vaillant only speculates about what comes after the forties and fifties--the Grant Study men were not of that age when he wrote the book. But he does imply that growth and change continue, as Erikson would also have us believe.

Roger Gould also builds on the Erikson framework, although he never acknowledges the debt. Nevertheless, the schema and the structure are distinctly Eriksonian:

> "...<u>adulthood is not a plateau</u>: rather, it is a dynamic and changing time for all of us. As we grow and change, we take steps <u>away</u> from childhood and <u>toward</u> adulthood--steps such as marriage, work, consciously developing a talent or buying a home." (Gould, 1978, p. 14)

Gould examines development from a psychoanalytic perspective and emphasizes the period up to mid-life. What is important about his work is that it represents a trend in adult development--Transformations is a pioneering work in adapting and applying the Eriksonian map to actual cases as an explication of observed behavior.

Gould elaborates the Erikson model by defining four stages of adulthood and by linking them specifically to ages. His stages focus around the destruction of myths about ourselves within the framework outlined below:

Age 16-22--leaving our parents' world
Age 22-28--establishing adulthood
Age 28-34--establishing intimacy and emotional maturity
Age 35-45--mid-life decade

Like Erikson, Gould sees each of these stages as a building block, a challenge that must be successfully met before the next stage can be undertaken. The major difference between the two is that Gould more sharply differentiates the stages of development and defines transition points somewhat more precisely.

As a psychiatrist he is interested in the pathology of these changes, but as with Vaillant he is more interested in charting healthy adaptations and responses. Like the others, Gould sees the great arc of growth extending from the self outward to encompass others beyond self and the nuclear family. In particular he focuses on the mid-life decade as the part in which this greatest challenge is faced.

Gould emphasizes the continuity of challenge and life while at the same time describing how different ages demand answers to different questions. He sees the mid-life crisis, or transition, as the last of the great challenges to be faced, and looks at the time after the transition as a relatively stable and even static period. Unlike Erikson, he does not see any great issue to be resolved in the post-transition period, nor does he devote much attention to it. Gould's emphasis on the pathology of growth and getting to final maturation leaves him with little to say about the final flowering of the growth process. In his epilogue, discussing Freud and Jung, he puts forward the notion that their most productive work was accomplished after their mid-life transitions, when, in Eriksonian terms, they were most generative.

Gould's schema is useful for two things--it illustrates the way in which Erikson's structure can be used and it extends that structure, drawing some important distinctions Erikson did not.

Although a contemporary, Daniel Levinson's work can most profitably be looked at as a culmination and capstone of the work of Vaillant, Gould, and Erikson. In The Seasons of a Man's Life, Levinson presents the most sophisticated and detailed model of adult development yet to be published. Figure 1 illustrates the developmental periods Levinson identifies in his book.

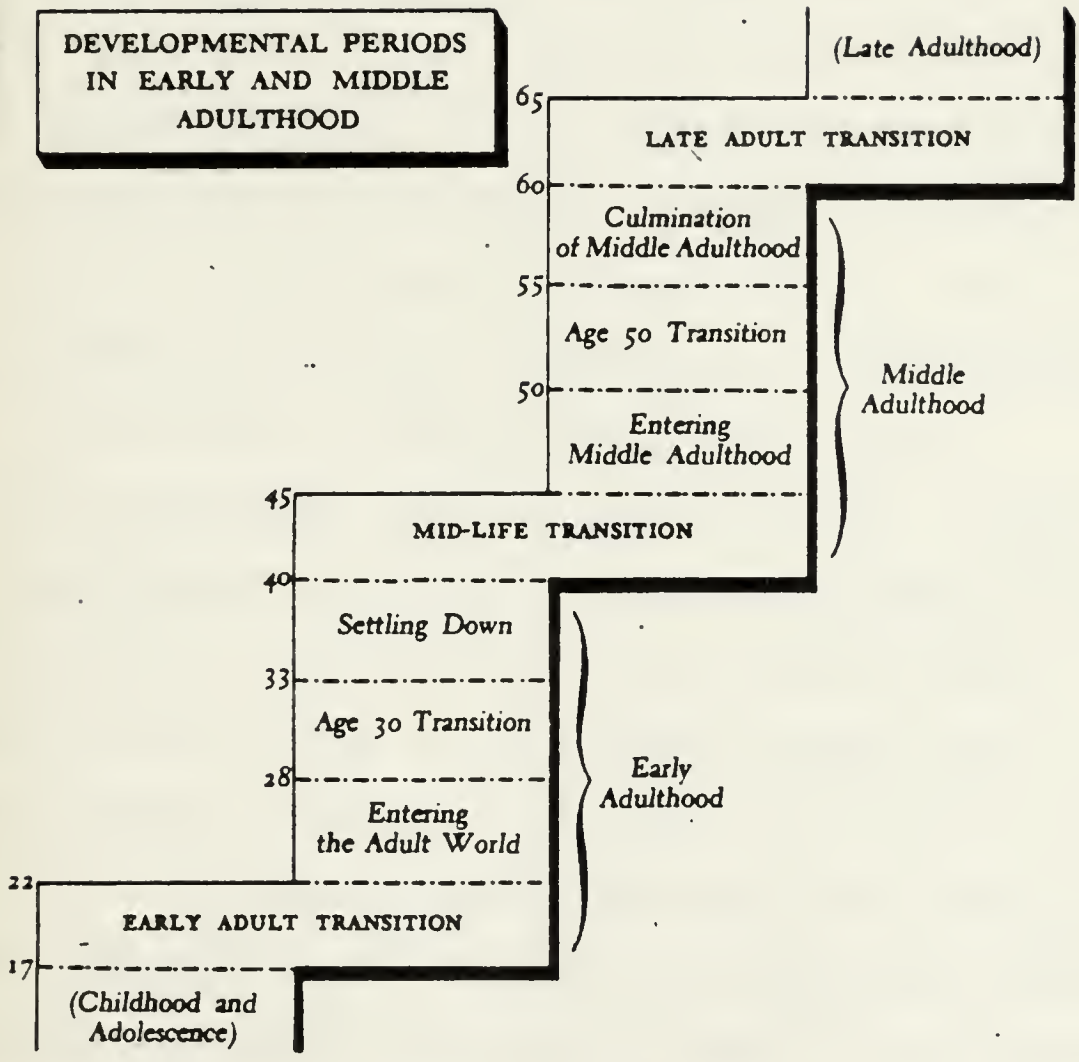

Figure 1

Levinson's Developmental Model

Some general characteristics of Levinson's conception should be noted. First, like Vaillant and Gould, he emphasizes the similarities and continuities of life. Transitions for Levinson are just that--they are not moments of high drama or melodramatic crisis, but simply a shift, over time, of priorities and life issues that each man faces. Second, he sees three major transitions and several secondary ones in the course of a man's life. Because of this structure, Levinson sees life as constantly changing; there is no one set pattern that will work throughout life or even throughout one developmental period. Therefore he has made space in his model for the kind of shifts that in fact occur.

Like his fellows, Levinson subscribes to a "building block" structure of human development--one phase of life must be successfully completed before the next can begin. The issues that each phase of development present must be resolved before progress is possible. As a result a man can get stuck in a phase of life that might not be appropriate to his calendrical age. Vaillant and Gould both noted this phenomenon--Vaillant even labelled some of his subjects Perpetual Boys as a result of their lack of growth through the normal stages.

Another salient characteristic of the Levinson formulation as his willingness to ascribe specific times to the events he describes. Although he emphasizes there is margin for error in this schema, the fact remains that he is

much more willing to say the "Mid-Life Transition" happens between ages 40 and 45, plus or minus only two years.

Levinson details four polarities whose resolution is the principal task of the Mid-Life Transition:

1. Young/Old, in which the sense of aging, the fear of death, and what he calls the Legacy--what will be left behind--are all important issues.

2. Destruction/Creation, in which the destructive impulses and the accumulated angers of life must be acknowledged and transcended before the creative impulse can have full reign.

3. Masculine/Feminine, in which the meaning and consequences of gender discrimination need to be re-examined, especially in relation to the sometimes opposing needs to achieve and to nurture.

4. Attachment/Separateness, the last task, in which the person must evaluate how he is attached to the environment of job, family, and other social structures and determine whether there should be adjustment in these relations.

Each of these polarities involves a re-evaluation of decisions made in the previous life phase of Becoming One's Own Man, itself the culmination of the Early Adult period. In that phase a man will have achieved his greatest success at what he started out to do in the early thirties--his achievements with family, in work, and in society at large lead inevitably in the Mid-Life Transition to a re-examination of the terms of life in the context of the polarities outlined above. If the degree of success attained is different from what Levinson calls "The Dream", then this Mid-Life Transition period may be especially acute.

With the successful resolution of the polarities, it is possible for a man to proceed onward with the task of individuation, a term Levinson borrows from Jung. By individuation Levinson means, among other things, the successful integration of the polarities and their resolution into a coherent whole, freeing the man for the creative work that is to come in Middle Adulthood.

Although Levinson extends Erikson's concept of generativity to include other factors, there is little difference between what Levinson describes as successful adaptations in Middle Adulthood and what Erikson describes as the generative man. The same characteristics of creativity, nurturance of the younger generation, and integration of opposites exist in both formulations.

B. CAREER DEVELOPMENT MODELS

There are a number of career development models, most of which emphasize some kind of hierarchical development through the life cycle. In many cases these stages are explicitly tied to calendrical age.

Miller and Form (1951) see essentially three stages after two preparatory life stages: a trial work period up to about age 35, a stable work period to retirement, and then retirement, at age 65. Although ground-breaking in conception, this model is somewhat lacking in specificity and is so generalized as not to be especially helpful.

Super, Hall and Nougaim, and others have elaborated this model, dividing the career variously into Exploration/Establishment/Maintenance/Retirement phases (Super) or Establishment/Advancement/Maintenance/Retirement phases (Hall and Nougaim). Schein (1978) uses a more elaborate division and ties it to specific ages. His career stages are:

1. Growth, fantasy, and exploration. Age 0-21.
2. Entry into the world of work. Age 16-25.
3. Basic training. Age 16-25.
4. Full membership in early career. Age 17-30.
5. Full membership, midcareer. Age 25+.
6. Midcareer crisis. Age 35-45.
7. A. Late career in nonleadership role. Age 40 to retirement.
   B. Late career in leadership role. Age varies.
8. Decline and disengagement. Age 40 to retirement. (Age of inception may vary.)
9. Retirement.

Schein has also developed a model that takes into account the different functional areas as well as the hierarchical nature of most organizations. The three-dimensional model he proposes (Schein, 1971) takes into account the dimensions along which career progression is possible. (See Figure 2.) The upward dimension equates with rank progression-promotion in the traditional sense, in which greater power, pay, and prestige are associated. Movement along the periphery of the model represents lateral transfer within the organization--movements from one functional area to another, either on the same or a different hierarchical level. Finally, the third dimension

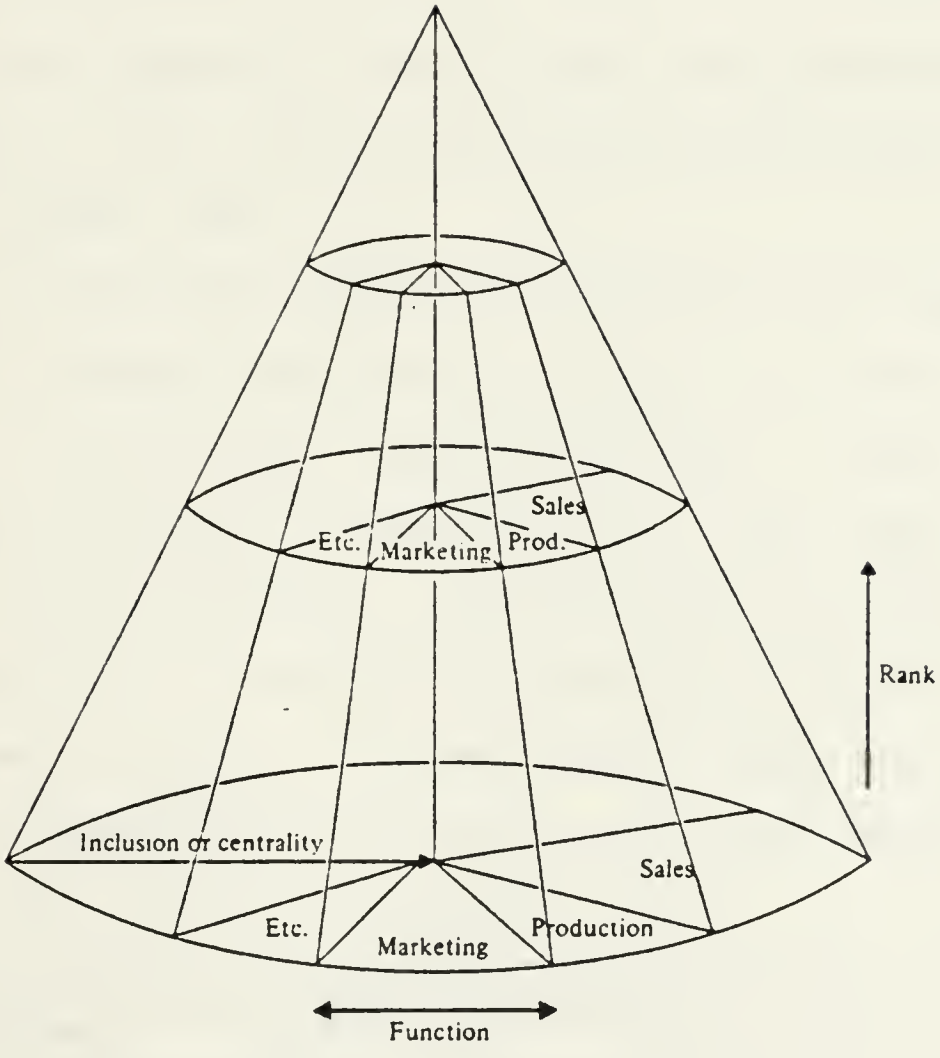

Figure 2

Schein's Conical Model (Schein, 1971)

is the inclusion dimension--the degree to which the person, whatever the nominal rank, is included in the internal workings of the organization. Crudely, this is a measure of power, but more subtly it represents the extent to which the person is socialized into the organization--is a keeper of the organization's traditions, secrets, and myths. It is entirely possible to be of lower rank but nevertheless more central to the organization than another person of nominally higher rank.

Schein's conception represents something of a summum, but it does not address the idea of time nor is it easy to graft the idea of duration onto the conical model. Other models capture the duration of careers and the things that happen to them in better fashion. One such model for managers is provided by T. P. Ference and associates (1976). They propose that a person in a career might occupy one of four states depending on his place within the organization. These are represented in the figure below.

Current Performance	Likelihood of Future Promotion	
	Low	High
High	Solid Citizens (effective plateauees) Organizationally Plateaued / Personally Plateaued	Stars
Low	Deadwood (ineffective plateauees)	Learners (comers)

Figure 3

A Model of Managerial Careers (Ference and associates, 1976)

Ference and associates explain the states as follows:

> "'Learners' or 'comers'. These individuals have high potential for advancement but presently perform below standard. Obvious examples are trainees who are still learning their new jobs...Also included are longer service managers who have recently been promoted...
>
> "'Star'. These persons presently do outstanding work and are viewed as having high potential for continued advancement...
>
> "'Solid citizens'. Their present performance is rated satisfactory to outstanding, but they are seen as having little chance for future advancement...
>
> "'Deadwood'. These individuals have little potential for advancement and their performance has fallen to an unsatisfactory level. (Ference and associates 1976, pp. 603-4)

One of the benefits of this model is that it captures the dynamics of the career--the shifts of state within the career that may contribute to performance or non-performance.

Hall (1976) uses a four stage model for careers: early career years, in which the principal task is to establish oneself in the chosen career field. This phase also includes the advancement stage of the career, in which the person reaches whatever level of attainment is likely. The second stage, which occurs around the mid-life point, Hall calls Mid-Career Maintenance. This is a long, plateau-like period in which the person maintains a level of achievement and aspiration. This period is followed by a Pre-retirement years, in which the individual makes the adjustments necessary to leave the workplace. Yet another period, that of retirement, follows. In both of these phases, the definition of

self and one's relationships with other people will change, since the self that is defined by the job must change with the changes in career.

The various stages of the career are summarized in Figure 4.

C. FAMILY CYCLES

In addition to the life cycle and the career cycle, most people also go through a family cycle, in which they marry, beget children, raise them, and part from them. That this is an important, even essential part of the life cycle is not in doubt, but the influence of it on the other two cycles is harder to pinpoint and less explicit. (Schein, 1978)

Hall (1976) proposes the following five stages for the family:

1. Becoming a Spouse: begins at marriage and ends with the birth of the first child.

2. Expanding Circle: begins with the birth of the first child and ends with the birth of the second child.

3. Peak Stage: the period in which the family has two or more pre-school children.

4. Full-house Plateau: starts when the youngest child enters school and ends when the first child leaves home.

5. Shrinking Circle: starts when the first child leaves home and ends when the last child leaves home.

6. Minimal Plateau: when all children have left home. (Hall, p. 57)

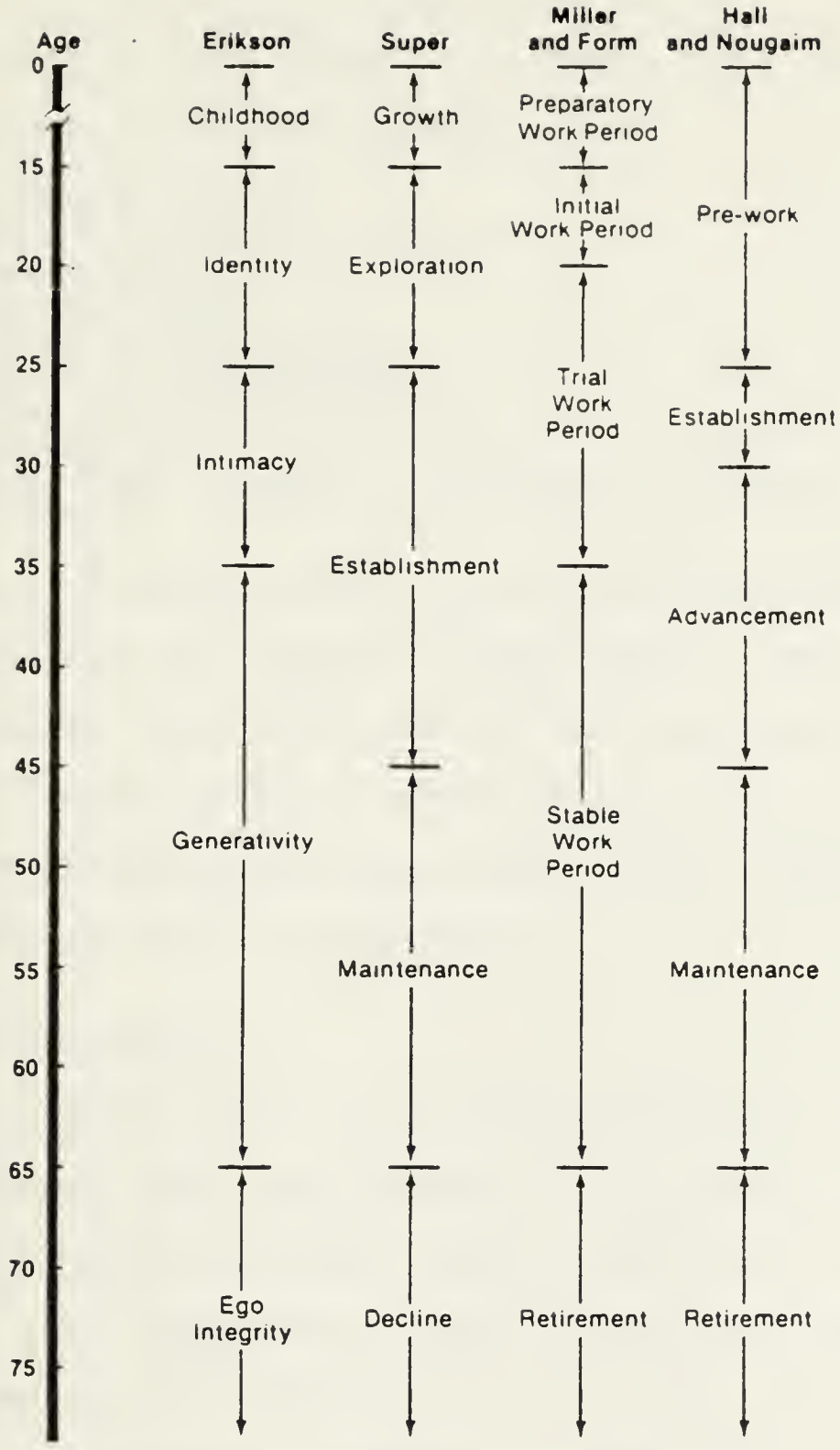

Figure 4

Hall's Comparison of Various Career Models (Hall, 1976)

Schein (1978) extends the family cycle to include stages in which a participant is not married. He delineates eight stages and one "stage" that is really a condition that could happen anytime in the adult life:

1. Dependent child.
2. Transition to adulthood.
3. Single adult.
4. Married adult.
5. Parent of young child.
6. Parent of adolescents
7. Parent of grown children.
8. Grandparent.
9. Separated, widowed, or divorced. (Schein, 1978, p. 50-52)

Neither Schein nor Hall is willing to make any ties to a specific age or a specific career stage. The interactions of the family cycle and the other two cycles are too tenuous to be so closely linked. As one author observed, "to be the father of an adolescent calls forth certain reactions whether the person is thirty or seventy."

D. SOME OBJECTIONS

This generalized view of these models would not be complete without some consideration of contrasting points of view. The career and family cycle models are so general, however, that there can be little controversy about them. The stages are well-defined by events--the birth of a child, the marriage ceremony, promotion or demotion at work. The meanings of these events are the stuff of which family chronicle novels are made and the material around which

television soap operas revolve. We don't need an academic to tell us these are important events.

The career cycle is similarly straight-forward. Although the details may give rise to some controversy and argument, the broad outlines are clear--there are periods of initiation, advancement, some maintenance or plateau activity, and then a gradual or abrupt closure to the work career. Certainly there are refinements possible to this conception, and the things that happen during the course of the career are capable of considerable elaboration. The effects of these changes on the person and the effects of the person on the organization are the grist for the management consultant mill.

There are real problems too in the management policy and planning areas. How does one successfully socialize a new employee, for example? What possibilities for growth and achievement are available to the manager on the late career plateau? What growth opportunities are there for the twenty-year veteran of the assembly line? How can either of these people be motivated to take the risky steps needed to ensure their growth? Questions like these are all legitimate outgrowths of a consideration of the career cycle. A critique of each of the models would involve how well they answer these kinds of equestions.

This essay, however, is interested in a slightly different set of questions--how does the life cycle of the

person interact with his career and family? Does the career and/or the family cycle reinforce or work against the development implied by the life cycle theorists? The answer of course is complicated. At certain points there are obvious reinforcements, at others there will be conflicts between these patterns. The fact that the theories do not dovetail neatly does not invalidate them; it simply serves to reinforce our previous knowledge that the world is a complicated place. Schein (1978) proposes that the general shape of these curves looks like that found in Figure 5.

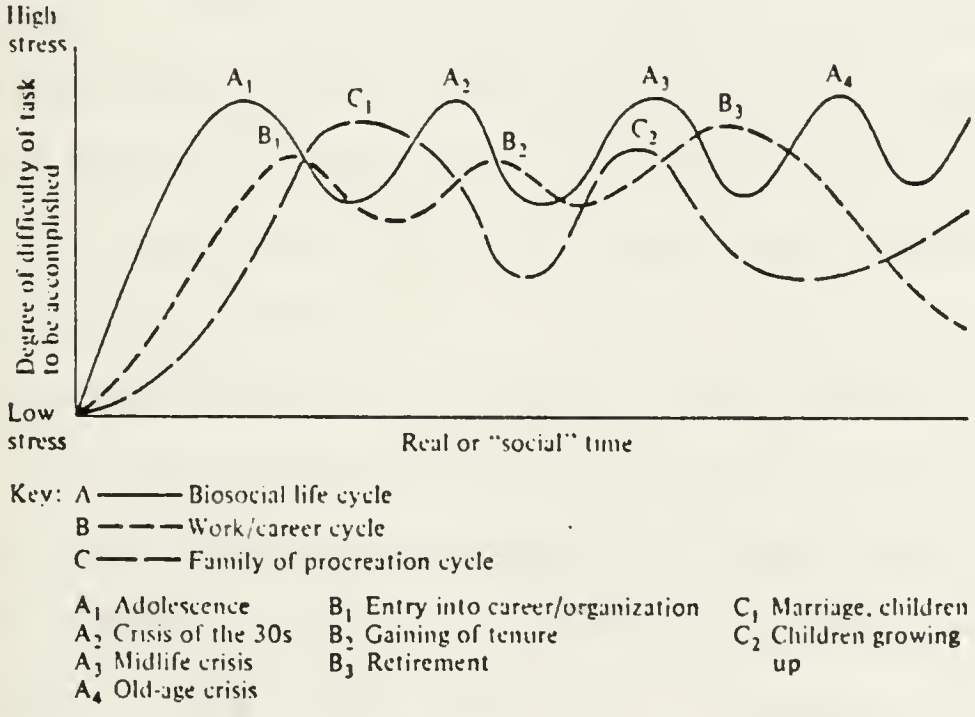

Figure 5

Life, Career, and Family Cycle Interactions (Schein, 1978)

This can however be no more than a generalized conception of these interactions for several reasons. Part of the problem is the variability of the career and family

cycles. These are not well-fixed in time. It is possible, for example, to be well along in the career cycle before marrying or raising children. The life cycles, however, especially as outlined by Levinson and Gould, are tied to calendrical age. That is, as the person gets older, certain things are going to happen, and it doesn't matter very much what else happens. Gould ties some of these changes to events (for example, the first house), but Levinson makes the point that just the fact of aging itself is going to trigger some stages in the life cycle--the Mid-Life Transition is a prime example.

It appears then that the life cycle, family cycle, and career cycle can give us a pattern, but not a plan, for lives and careers. There will be certain events and there will be certain transitions, but the timing of these events may be less than distinct.

A contrasting criticism can be levied against Levinson's model: it is far and away <u>too</u> specific and too detailed. Levinson is willing, on the basis of rather scanty evidence, to commit himself to definite dates for certain career and life stages. These dates are open to question. The events themselves may or may not take place. For example, it would be doing an injustice to say that every man who has not established a home of his own by age 30 is abnormal or, worse yet, has remained in an immature state. But this is the logical outcome of Levinson's schema. Were every man to

follow Levinson's development pattern the world would be a less interesting place and the varieties of human experience more limited.

Nevertheless, Levinson probably makes a good point in emphasizing that the issues he has identified must be dealt with, else they will surface at a later, less appropriate, time in the man's life. By Levinson's reckoning, a man must at least come to terms with the issue of raising a family (he may decide not to, for a variety of reasons) and creating his own home, independent of his parents. If these issues are not met in some way, then the man will find that he must deal with them in a later context, when perhaps the congruence of career and aging pressures are less favorable for working out this kind of issue.

In this point of view, Levinson follows Erikson closely. Both thinkers believe firmly that the issues of one stage of life must be dealt with before the next stage can be adequately tackled. But both also believe that a person can have many issues on the agenda at the same time, especially if they have not been resolved in previous stages of life.

III. NAVY CAREER PATTERNS

The next question that must be resolved is how all these patterns relate to the Navy's career paths. One of the central questions of this paper is whether these career patterns help or hinder the life cycle. What is the congruence, or lack of it, between what men want to do with their lives and what they have to do to make the Navy a career?

Figure 6 reproduces the career path for the surface line officer in the Navy, as set out by the Navy publication Unrestricted Line Officer Career Planning Guidebook. Some comments about the career paths implicit in Figure 6 are in order.

First, the chart is somewhat deceptive, because there are choke points through which the officer must pass to get to the next career point. For example, promotion to Lieutenant Commander, is not possible if the officer has not filled the department head billet at sea. Similarly, the Lieutenant Commander Executive Officer tour is a requirement for Commander command at sea, which is in itself a prerequisite for promotion to Captain. The figure seems to indicate that there is a path to promotion to Captain without being an Executive Officer or Commanding Officer.

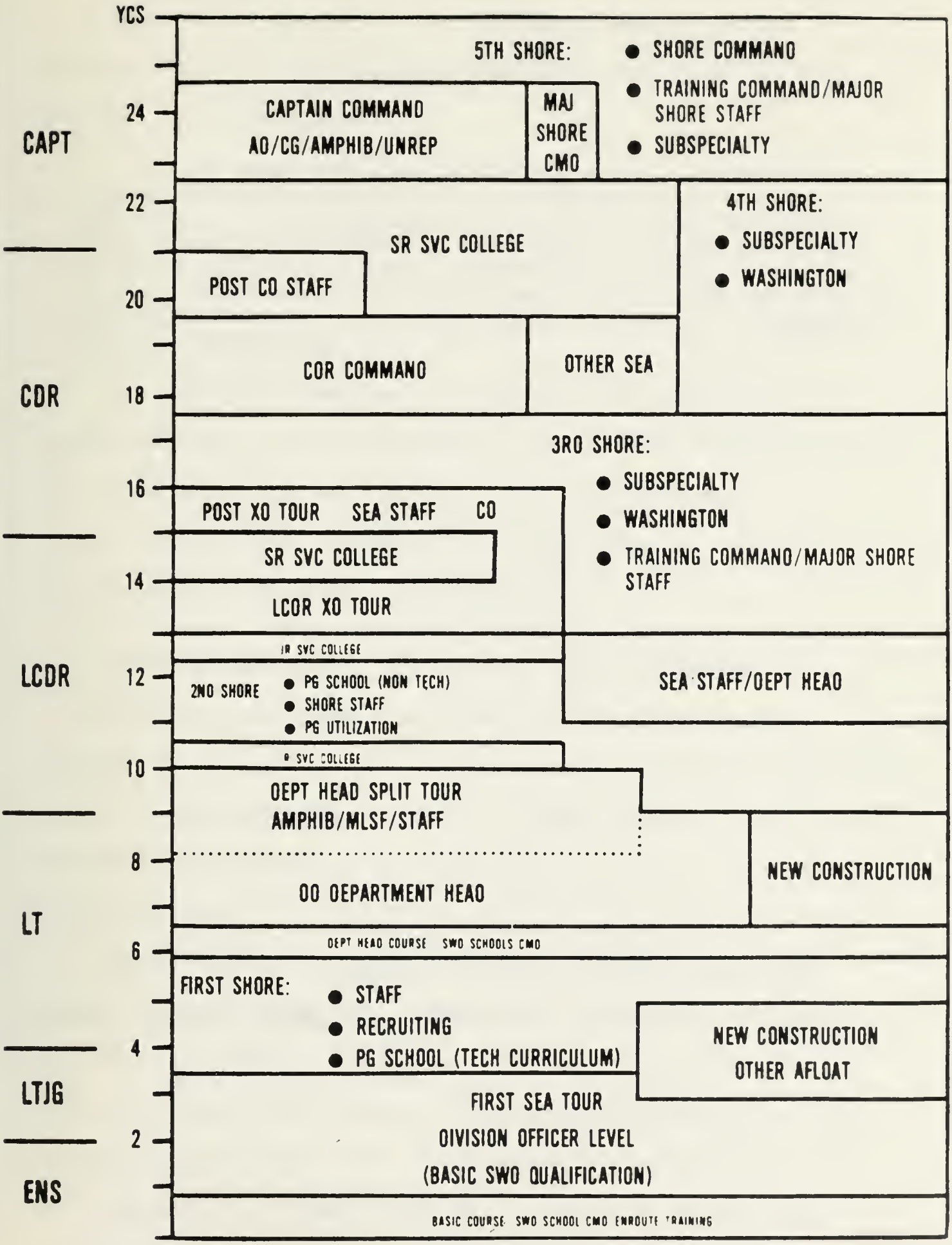

Figure 6

Surface Warfare Officer Professional Development Path

Command at sea is the one unambiguous indicator of success for the surface line officer. The text of the booklet is forthright:

> "It is important to understand that, for the URL [Unrestricted Line] officer, development in a subspecialty is not a generally available alternative to operational development...there will be very few URL officers who will pursue development in their subspecialty exclusively after gaining a degree of operational expertise at less than the command level..." (Career Planning Guidebook, p. 7)

As a practical matter, about half of the Navy's Commanders will attain command at sea. The remainder will stay ashore in various billets with, effectively, no chance for further promotion. The system is, by its very nature, intensely competitive.

A. PROPOSITIONS ABOUT THE EFFECTS OF THE CAREER

Speculations about the effect of the Navy career pattern on the life cycle are reduced to ten "propositions" in the following pages. Each of these propositions is a tentative statement about what might be found in an investigation.

Proposition 1: Conformity and regimentation are recognized and rewarded. Obviously, the Navy system is complex and rewards the person who stays "on track"--a person who does not deviate from the standard career progression and fulfills the requirements for promotion and advancement in a timely fashion. The high degree of regimentation implied is a reflection of the abundance of

talent the system enjoys; intolerance of deviance is impossible in a resource-poor personnel system. Ultimate rewards are relatively scarce and this fact helps keep people in line as well. About one-quarter of all Lieutenants will eventually achieve command at sea, based on current promotion and selection figures. The conclusion, then, is that this is a promotion and selection system that does not reward originality (at least as expressed in career choice) nor does it tolerate much in the way of non-conformity.

Proposition 2: Short-term goals are visible and important. Regimentation as discussed above, and the demands of the promotion system for performance in specialized, technical fields should lead to concentration on immediate career goals to the exclusion of much else. To fulfill all the requirements of his career requires that the Naval officer spend most of his waking hours concentrating on that career.

Proposition 3: Feedback is immediate and expected. The Naval officer's concentration is reinforced by the immediate and effective feedback he receives. The annual system of fitness reports tells each officer what he has done well and what poorly. The variety of jobs each person holds in the course of the career also provides feedback. If the next job is a better one or is one from which the officer can be promoted, then he has received

positive feedback. The rotation system, coupled with the promotion system, provides this kind of feedback opportunity on average every sixteen months in a twenty-year career.

Proposition 4: The Navy career is highly compressed. Figure 7 compares the Navy's surface line officer career path with the patterns developed by Levinson, Gould, and Schein. Perhaps the most remarkable thing to be learned from this comparison is to note the extreme compression of the Naval career in comparison with the civilian pattern. Although the early years of the Naval officer's career are similar to his civilian counterpart's, by the mid-range of his career, the Navy officer is moving rapidly toward a senior position in his community. In many respects the make-or-break tour is the department head tour, which determines whether the officer will become an Executive Officer and attain command. This milestone is at the end of the "early career" phase of Schein's synthesis, and in the midst of Levinson's Age 30 Transition. Similarly, the peak of the officer's career, command at sea, is attained at about 40 years in age, after a career of some 18 years. Looking across the figure, this is the point at which, in civilian careers, the leadership/non-leadership decision is being made. It also corresponds very closely to the Mid-Life Transition, which all three authors pinpoint at the beginning of the forties decade.

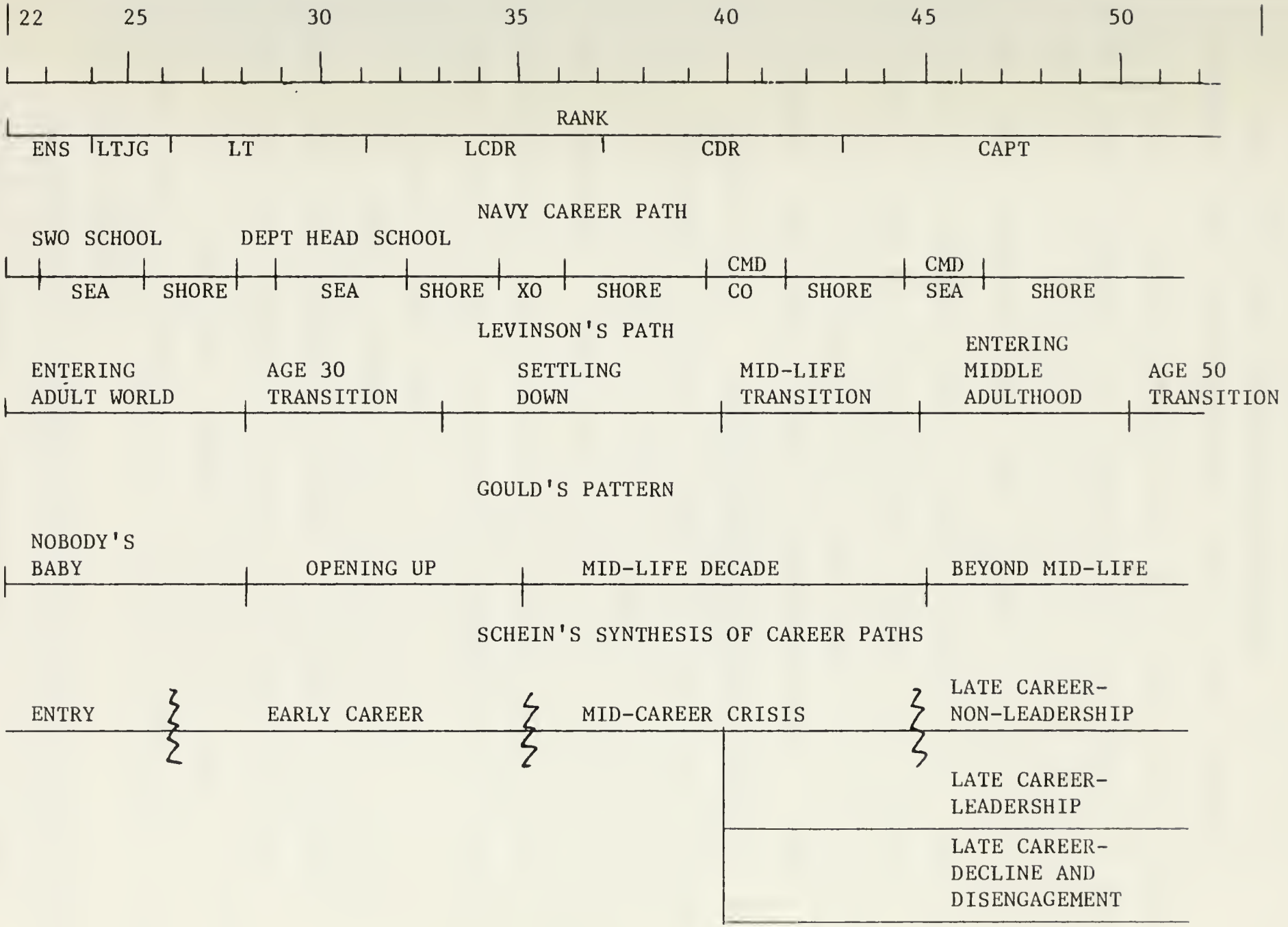

Figure 7. Comparison of Life, Career, and Family Cycles

Proposition 5: Because of compression, late careers are less defined in direction and goals. By the time their command tours are over, Naval officers are looking at a stretch of time before them that has fewer well-defined goals and fewer rewards of the tangibility that command at sea has. They are left with considerable uncertainty about direction for their careers. They are eligible to retire either at the end of command tours or shortly thereafter. They have families they may have neglected during their climb to the top of their profession. Interviews with officers in command tours reflect these concerns (Morrison, 1983).

Proposition 6: Ultimate goals are well-defined. Given the compression inherent in the Naval career and the well-defined set of steps necessary to make it to the top of the profession it might be expected that the officer just beginning his career could have a clearly-defined set of goals. He can see what he has to accomplish at each duty station and in each rank.

Well-defined ultimate goals imply as well a clearly-defined, well-thought out Dream. It should be possible for the Naval officer to lay out goals and objectives on the way to fulfilling a Dream involving the Navy. Fulfilling such a Dream implies an early, complete commitment to the Navy as a career.

Proposition 7: Becoming One's Own Man is more difficult in the Navy. Because of the importance of the various

feedback systems, one could logically expect that the average Naval officer would be concerned with the opinions of others and would tend to evaluate himself in terms imposed by others. Naturally, this tendency would decline over time as more of the selection and promotion criteria were met, or as it became obvious that they would not be met. It appears that this career makes it more difficult for these men to become self-actualized, in Levinson's sense of Becoming One's Own Man.

Proposition 8: Mentoring is vital to success. Anecdotal evidence indicates there is a strong "old boy" network in the Navy. In part this impression is fostered by the mystique of the various service academies and in part by a perception within the service that certain people get the best jobs. Depending on the person's point of view, this might be the admiral's aide, the assignment officer in the Navy's personnel command, or the man who married the boss's daughter. Levinson and others argue that forming mentoring relationships between older and younger men is an essential part of the development process and a prerequisite for success. One expects then, that older Naval officers would be in the position of being mentors, and have had experience with mentors in their past. Mid-range Naval officers should be the beneficiaries of such mentoring and the newly-commissioned officer might be innocent of any such experience.

Proposition 9: Early search activity is precluded by Navy career requirements. The hard road to success illustrated by the Navy career path requires early choices and demands early commitment. This requirement may conflict with entry-level search activity that Levinson describes in the Entering the Adult World phase. Other authors (Hall, e.g.) support the idea of a period at the beginning of a career, usually in the early to mid-twenties, that allows provisional commitment and search for a niche. Navy junior officers may be precluded from such activity.

Proposition 10: The Mid-Life Transition is less significant because of institutional support. For the long-term officer, the Mid-Life Transition should be an easier process than for his civilian counterpart. Secure in a tenured position, he potentially has the luxury of taking time to think through the issues of this time. Conversely, he is in a pressured situation in which such time might not be available, causing him to suppress such a transition (note that command and the beginning of the Mid-Life Transition coincide). The Naval officer has of course the option of making a career change at that time as well, because of the military's twenty-year retirement option.

B. VERIFICATION OF THE PROPOSITIONS

The conclusions of the previous discussion are all theoretical, based on assumptions about adult development

theories and the Navy career patterns reported in official documents. Conditions in the real world may be radically different. To test what actual conditions are, Appendices A and B were developed.

Appendix A is patterned closely after Schein's catalogue of issues to be dealt with by life stage and is heavily oriented toward career information (Schein, 1978). This emphasis is appropriate, since we are concerned with the relation of the life cycle and the career. In the course of data-gathering, considerable confirmatory evidence for Levinson's theory of adult development was also generated, although an independent replication of Levinson's theory is not a major thrust of this essay.

The instrument was used as the basis for a structured interview with the author. Responses sometimes suggested follow-up questions which expanded particular areas of interest. Except for the first page, the respondents did not have access to the questionnaire, therefore their answers were unprepared and were rather more spontaneous than otherwise.

Two populations were selected: (1) newly commissioned officers in the surface line community, and (2) mid-grade, mid-career officers. A sample of ten Ensigns and ten Lieutenant Commanders was interviewed, with most interviews lasting about one hour.

The Ensigns were in the final two weeks of training at the Surface Warfare Officers School Detachment in Coronado, California. They were chosen by the staff of the school after solicitation by an instructor. They do not, therefore, represent a truly random sample of the entire Ensign population. The Lieutenant Commanders were chosen from a group of volunteers attending the Naval Postgraduate School in Monterey, California. In both cases, the results of the interviews may be affected by the school situation for these officers as well as their non-random selection.

Tables 1 and 2 indicate that these samples do not vary greatly from the populations of Ensigns and Lieutenant Commanders in the Navy at large, suggesting that the effects of their non-random selection may not be significant. Because of the small differences between the samples and the populations for each group, it is believed that, although not randomly chosen, they represent the population fairly.

Appendix B is the interview instrument used for the senior officer group. Because of the difficulty of obtaining a representative sample of surface line officers, this sample includes officers of the staff corps as well. As a result, the interview concentrated in areas that, a priori, would seem to cut across staff and line divisions--the officer's Dream, his mentoring relationships, and his reaction to his own aging as he went through the Mid-Life Transition.

These officers represent the entire population of active duty Navy Captains at the Naval Postgraduate School. To the extent that they were selected without pattern by the Navy's Military Personnel Command, they represent a random sample. As Table 3 shows, however, these officers are generally older and have more years of service than their peers (all the Navy's Captains). They are better-educated than a third of their peers. Although these factors skew the demographic characteristics of the sample, all values are within half a standard deviation for the population. Although the sample was not randomly chosen, the variations from the population as a whole are small enough for the group to be considered representative.

C. RESULTS OF THE INVESTIGATION WITH ENSIGNS

The officers interviewed for this study were just completing a rigorous sixteen-week course of instruction designed to prepare them for their first jobs. Without exception they were anxious to get on with their work. They spoke with considerable sophistication about the requirements of their jobs and their place in their organizations.

In the previous section it was hypothesized that these young officers would likely be committed to the military as a career, since early success and achievement are important in attaining long-term goals of command at sea and promotion.

Table 1

Demographic Characteristics of Ensigns

Characteristic	Interview Group Mean	Population* Mean	S.D.
Number	10	865	
Age (Years)	23.7	23.0	1.88
Time in Service (Years)	.5	1.6	.53
Time in Grade (Months)	6	9.0	6.74
Education (Per cent)			
Less than Bachelor's	0	.2	
Bachelor's	90.0	99.0	
More than Bachelor's	10.0	.8	
Race (Per cent)			
White	80.0	92.4	
Black	20.0	4.2	
Other/Unknown	0	3.4	
Commissioning Source (Per cent)			
Naval Academy	30.0	48.8	
ROTC	50.0	46.4	
OCS	20.0	.9	
Other	0	3.8	
Marital Status (Per cent)			
Married	10.0	13.5	
Single	90.0	86.5	
Dependents (Per cent)			
None	90.0	86.1	
One	10.0	10.5	
Two	0	2.0	
Three or more	0	1.4	
Mean	.1	.2	.53

*Population is all 111X and 116X Ensigns.

Data supplied by Defense Manpower Data Center, as of June 1983.

Table 2

Demographic Characteristics of Lieutenant Commanders

Characteristic	Interview Group Mean	Population* Mean	S.D.
Number	10	1744	
Age (Years)	34	35.7	3.96
Time in Service (Years)	11.1	13.3	3.58
Time in Grade (Months)	29.9	44.1	32.4
Education (Per cent)			
Less than Bachelor's	0	1.5	
Bachelor's	100.0	63.6	
Master's	0	34.6	
PhD.	0	.2	
Race (Per cent)			
White	90.0	96.7	
Black	10.0	2.1	
Other/Unknown	0	1.2	
Commissioning Source (Per cent)			
Naval Academy	40.0	32.1	
ROTC	30.0	23.2	
OCS	30.0	29.2	
Other	0	15.5	
Marital Status (Per cent)			
Married	100.0	87.5	
Single	0	12.5	
Dependents (Per cent)			
None	0	9.5	
One	30.0	19.7	
Two	20.0	19.7	
Three	30.0	43.9	
Four	20.0	12.4	
Five or more	0	4.3	
Mean	2.4	2.4	1.35

*Population is all 1110 Lieutenant Commanders.

Data supplied by Defense Manpower Data Center, as of June 1983.

Table 3

Demographic Characteristics of Captains

Characteristic	Interview Mean	Population* Mean	S.D.
Number	9	3986	
Age (Years)	49.2	47.6	4.32
Time in Service (Years)	25.1	22.1	8.85
Time in Grade (Months)	Not available	49.6	35.1
Education (Per cent)			
Less than Bachelor's	0	3.1	
Bachelor's	0	33.0	
Master's	88.8	43.0	
Phd.	11.1	20.9	
Race (Per cent)			
White	100	97.9	
Black	0	.8	
Other/Unknown	0	1.4	
Commissioning Source (Per cent)			
Naval Academy	33.3	23.9	
ROTC	0	13.0	
OCS	44.4	22.6	
Other	22.2	41.1	
Marital Status (Per cent)			
Married	88.8	92.2	
Single	11.1	7.8	
Dependents (Per cent)			
None	11.1	4.9	
One	0	9.5	
Two	11.1	13.8	
Three	44.4	33.0	
Four	22.2	24.4	
Five or more	11.1	14.4	
Mean	3.1	3.1	1.46

*Population is all Navy Captains.

Data supplied by Defense Manpower Data Center, as of June 1983.

In fact this is not the case. Not one of these officers feels committed to the Navy as a career, and three definitely will not make the service their life work. Instead of a long-term obligation, these men share with their civilian counterparts a tentative commitment to this structure for their lives. Since nine of the ten were unmarried, their ability to project exactly what their lives would be like, what their needs are, and so on, seems to be extremely limited. The longest time any of the Ensigns would commit himself to was ten years. At that time he would have to make a decision about the Navy as a long-term career. Most expressed the idea that they would re-examine their willingness to continue in the service on a periodic basis, usually in conjunction with rotational moves.

Levinson hypothesizes that the formation of a Dream--the articulation of what a man would like to achieve in his life--is an essential part of the development process. Dreams do not, of course, show up full-blown: they are developed as the person ages and becomes more sure of what he wants out of life. The Ensigns interviewed had Dreams that could best be described as fantasies, since they had very little idea of how they were going to operationalize their aspirations.

A characteristic of these vaguely-defined Dreams was their personal nature. With rare exceptions, they revolved around family, home, and children. One young

officer reported he wanted to run his family's business. Another said he wanted to be a Congressman. However, the majority of the Dreams were centered on the traditional family structure. (The two minority members of the survey did not differ in this respect.)

None of these officers saw any distinct difference between their lives at forty and their lives at fifty. In many respects they expected age 50 to be more of the same as age 40. This is a pattern we will see repeated in the mid-grade officers.

Although these men had not operationalized their vaguely-defined Dreams, they were able to spell out short-term goals relating to their careers and their lives with a great deal of clarity. In part this is a function of the track system their employer has set up. Their goals for the next five years are dictated, since they involve qualifications for advancement and higher responsibility. Without exception, these officers accepted this sytem. None questioned either the wisdom or the efficacy of the process they were embarked on. They expected prompt feedback on how well or poorly they were fulfilling expectations, usually in the form of fitness reports, but also in qualifications and promotion. As might be expected there was a high degree of uniformity in their outlook and their approach to their work.

An unexpected corollary to the acceptance of conformity and regimentation these young officers exhibited was a distinct perception that they were neither responsible for nor had control over their lives. In their interviews they exhibited the feeling they were pawns in the hands of the system. Having made a decision to become Naval officers, they were now caught up in an organization that would dictate the conditions of their lives and employment for some time to come. This idea became most apparent when they were asked about their goals for the next five years. In almost all cases, the goals were expressed as a function of the Navy and the terms of fulfilling those goals were completely dictated by the Navy.

In broad brush, then, the Ensign is tentatively committed, has only poorly-defined Dreams, conforms to a regimented system for which he takes little responsibility, but as a result has clearly-defined short range goals.

D. RESULTS OF THE INVESTIGATION WITH LIEUTENANT COMMANDERS

By the time an officer has reached the rank of Lieutenant Commander, he will have had if all goes to plan, at least four tours at sea--two as a division officer and two as a department head. He will have had one, possibly two tours ashore. In contrast to the Ensigns, the overwhelming majority of officers of this rank are

married, and more than 70 per cent of them have at least one child.

The twelve years in age that separates the average Lieutenant Commander from the average Ensign is reflected in a number of different concerns. The most striking difference is that the older officers demonstrate that they are becoming their own men. The days of doubt about their careers are over. Of the officers sampled, all had in varying degrees committed themselves to the idea of command at sea as the goal for their careers. All saw themselves as attaining that goal, although some were starting to re-examine the validity of their specific command goals (i.e., what kind of ship and so on). Most importantly, however, these officers reported that their own evaluations of their performance were most important to them. Although the Navy's fitness reporting system is especially vital at this time in their lives, these men almost uniformly were more concerned about how they felt they had done in their jobs. Only two of the ten reported that the fitness report was a more important indicator of their performance than their own evaluation of that performance.

Becoming One's Own Man is not just a matter of evaluation. Developing confidence in one's own expertise and ability, being able to pinpoint that ability and to put it to use, while compensating for perceived weaknesses, are also part of the process. Each of these officers felt that

he had certain strengths and weaknesses. None felt that these factors had any significant implications for their careers--the general idea was that the Navy is large enough to accommodate all kinds of officers.

As might be expected, these men are committed to their careers although the context of their commitment is now in making a decision to stay beyond the twenty-year mark. Most expressed the idea that the decision would depend on their evaluation of future career prospects, whether they were still enjoying their careers, and whether their families deserved more of their time and energy. Only one of the ten said that he did not feel a strong commitment to a twenty-year career. He reported that he looked on his career as a contract which he re-examined every time he was due for a change of station. In this respect he was similar to the Ensigns. A second officer, although he felt committed to at least a twenty-year career, reported that his motivation had grown weaker with time because he was finding command at sea a less attractive goal. Recall that there is no room for advancement or promotion apart from the command track for these officers and the reader will be able to appreciate this officer's dilemma.

Although one expects these men to have found a mentor, such was not the case. Only one reported that he had a long term relationship with anyone who could be defined as a mentor. Although most had consulted with more senior

officers about their careers and about job decisions, they did not feel they had someone to turn to help their careers.

Like the Ensigns, these men did not see their lives becoming significantly different in the decade between forty and fifty. Although most anticipated that they would change their jobs in that time--usually to a civilian position in management or teaching--few saw any crisis ahead. In the words of one of them, age fifty would be "more of the same" as age forty. Interestingly enough, it was easier to get these men to open up about a Dream couched in terms of age fifty than in one in terms of age forty. Since for them forty is only two tours away, they can foresee what they will be doing, and in many respects it is what they want.

None of these officers reported significant problems at home. Their children are for the most part in school or infants. Only one reported a traditional authoritarian family life. All others reported a shared decision-making process that included strong and firm inputs from wives as to location of the next duty station. One of the officers stated that he had chosen a wife who was willing to subordinate her ambitions to his. Certainly the families these men head occupy a much less important position in their lives than their careers do. All of them are on track to achieving command at sea, and they have traded off attainment of that goal for raising a family. One of

the officers stated that he and his wife had consciously deferred children until he had reached the point in his career he is at now. The ages of these men's children indicate that other have made similar decisions. Of the 14 children, five are infants.

In sharp contrast to the Ensigns, the Lieutenant Commanders felt considerable control over their lives. More than one expressed the fact that he had always gotten what he wanted from the Navy (and was happy about it). They felt they could do anything they wanted to and that the Navy would permit them to follow their own bent in shaping their careers.

Where the Ensign was tentative and perhaps apprehensive, the Lieutenant Commander is assured and confident. The older man has developed a Dream--usually involving a significant career goal--and he sees himself in a fair way to achieving it. Married now, with an average of 1.4 children, he has given his career priority in his life. There is little to fear of the unknown and the future is assured for the Lieutenant Commander.

E. RESULTS OF THE INVESTIGATION WITH CAPTAINS

Because of the difficulty of obtaining enough line officers to participate in this research, the field for Captains was expanded to include staff corps as well as line officers. Within the group, the responses of the line officers and the staff corps officers were practically indistinguishable.

Where the Lieutenant Commanders and the Ensigns had the idea that they were making only a tentative commitment to their careers, such was not the case for the Captains. The Captain with the least experience had been in the Navy for 17 years (he was a staff corps officer) and one had been in the Navy for 33 years (he had prior enlisted service). As Table 3 points out, these men are nearly 50, all but one are married, and they are exclusively white. They have more children than the Lieutenant Commanders, perhaps reflecting changing social mores.

There are more significant differences between this group and the two preceding ones. Each of these men had gone through the phase of Becoming One's Own Man. Without exception they expressed the idea that they valued their own opinions of themselves above that of others. Moreover, they were clear and candid about their weaknesses and proud of their strengths. In some cases the acknowledgement of their weaknesses had come only at considerable cost--after being denied promotion, selection or some similar career crisis. However, they each had come to terms with their limits and come to accept them.

Like their Lieutenant Commander juniors, they had Dreams, sometimes still had them, although most saw themselves living out their Dreams. Their Dreams had changed and become more realistic over time. Rather than being Chief of Naval Operations, they had to settle for being

Captains. Others had re-focused their lives after being denied selection for greater responsibility. Of the nine, only one still harbors ambitions of being selected for flag rank. One Captain said he wanted a major command after his destroyer command. He was denied the opportunity and spent some time in adjusting his sights to "more reasonable expectations," as he put it.

Six of the nine had mentors in their careers--up sharply from the Ensign and Lieutenant Commander experience. The same number (not necessarily the same men) reported that they had done mentoring of more junior officers. Several reported that this experience was one of the more rewarding parts of their careers at this time. Several of the Captains are faculty members at the Naval Postgraduate School and their feelings about teaching could be properly characterized as those of mentors. They seem to find satisfaction in being generative and nurturing in the teaching field.

Interestingly enough, there have been no divorces among this group of men. In spite of anecdotal evidence about the instability of military marriages, this sample gave no evidence of it. The families appeared to be very meaningful to these men. Several talked about the support and help their families had been when they were going through especially bad periods in their lives. In many cases the level of emotion was intense, but completely unabashed and apparently genuine.

Like the Ensigns, many of these men had confronted uncertainty in their careers and their lives. For many, leaving the command tour was an especially wrenching experience, since they had little idea of what they were going to do with their lives from that point onward. For those who had had command experience (6 of 9), the attainment of command was the apogee of their lives and the fulfillment of long-cherished Dreams and ambitions.

Six of the nine had experienced some form of Mid-Life Transition. The transition took the form either of change in attitudes or expectations, and in a few cases the Captains redirected their careers into channels in which they could become generative and make a contribution that they and the Navy valued. Families and their own sense of self-worth were especially valuable in helping them to get through this period. The principal triggering events for the Mid-Life Transition appeared to be failure to select for promotion or a significant job and leaving the command position. In both cases a significant period of soul-searching and re-examination occurred. Several of the Captains reported that classmates or acquaintances left the Navy at this point. For those that stayed, life took on a very different aspect as they neared the age of 50.

IV. CONCLUSIONS

The research reported in the previous section supports most of the propositions about Naval officers' careers that were made earlier. A review of these propositions and the findings of the research follows. Table 4 summarizes the conclusions.

A. SPECIFIC CONCLUSIONS

It was hypothesized that these men, especially young Naval officers, would have clear-cut short-term goals. In fact this was the case for the Ensigns and the Lieutenant Commanders. Both groups could spell out with a great deal of clarity what they wanted to do in the next five years. In part this is a result of the highly-structured career pattern they are participants in. It is easy to see where you will be in five years if the goals are laid out to the twenty-year point.

However, the speculation that young officers would also have clear and distinct long-term goals did not hold. Although these officers know what they must accomplish in the next five years they were very unwilling to commit themselves to longer-term goals. In part this unwillingness may be a reflection of tentativeness about the choice of career. Although the goals are well-defined if the person chooses

Table 4

Summary of Conclusions

Proposition	Ensigns	LtCmdrs	Captains
1. Conformity & regimentation are rewarded.	No	No	No
2. Short-term goals well-defined.	Yes	Yes	No
3. Immediate feedback expected.	Yes	No	No
4. Career compression observed.	Perhaps	Yes	Yes
5. Late career less well-defined.	Not applicable	Yes	Yes
6. Ultimate goals and Dream well-defined. Career commitment.	No	Yes	Yes
7. Becoming One's Own Man more difficult.	Perhaps	No	Perhaps
8. Mentoring vital to success.	No evidence	No	Yes
9. Search activity precluded.	No	Not applicable these ranks.	
10. Mid-Life Transition less disruptive.	Yes	Yes	No
Additional findings			
Not responsible for life.	Yes	No	No data
Families vital for support function.	Perhaps	Perhaps	Yes

to stay in the Navy, most of the Ensigns had not made such a commitment.

Although any objective observer would see the lives the young and mid-grade officers are leading as highly regimented, they do not apparently feel that way. Both groups seemed to accept the lock-step approach that their career specialties demand. There is little questioning of the ultimate goal--command at sea--or of the methods of required to get there.

The case for more senior officers, however, is different. There was, on the part of the Captains, more reflection on what had gone before--a willingness perhaps to examine the what-ifs and to speculate on how there might have been different paths to achievement. The Captains were less concerned with ultimate objectives and had fewer, or at least less-clearly articulated, short-term goals.

Both the early and mid-career officers reported little involvement with the world outside the Navy. This was as expected. The frequent moves and job changes required by the Navy, plus the demands of an intense career, militate against any deep involvement. As might be expected of a traditional occupation like the military, such deep involvements in the community as do occur focus around traditional outlets--church and family. Little League coaching or some form of scouting were the most frequent community outlets for these officers. Only one Ensign reported a desire for involvement in the political process. None expressed an

interest in the arts. The situation was slightly different for the senior officers, all of whom are on shore tours. In most cases their families and their own bent have led them to some involvement with the community in which they live. It would appear that this kind of activity is a function of seniority and assignment. As the officer grows older and/or his assignment becomes less demanding, community involvement increases.

The overwhelming majority of Lieutenant Commanders reported that their own evaluation of their performance was more important to them than that of others. Similar results were apparent with the Captains. It would appear from this and from other statements that the process of Becoming One's Own Man is not, contrary to speculation earlier, inhibited by the military career. Although the feedback loops are well-established and formalized, most of these men have come to feel that their own opinion is worth more than that of others.

Anecdotal evidence to the contrary, there does not appear to be a great deal of mentoring going on at the early or mid-career stages. Only two of the twenty junior officers reported that they were mentored. Mentoring does appear to increase with rank and age. This phenomenon is perhaps a function of two factors. First, a mentor becomes more important with seniority because the career path becomes less clear-cut. A contact who can give advice or help get a

job is much more valuable when the range of choice is so large as to preclude specific direction. This is the case with most senior officers not in command tours. Second, mentoring may have been more important in the past than it is now. The Captains are reporting on experience of the last 25 years, on average. There may have been sufficient changes in the Navy in the last 25 years to preclude the need for mentoring in present conditions.

Finding a mentor and establishing a mentoring relationship is one of the hallmarks of maturing, according to Levinson and most other theorists. It does not appear to be as important in this context. Possibly the greater emphasis on structured careers is a factor. Conceivably the lack of mentoring activity is a result of a more formal promotion system, coupled with a selection system that relies on objective criteria (fulfillment of formal qualifications, written reports of performance, and so on). It is also possible that the mentoring relationship is not possible unless there are truly generative people in the system. This possibility will be explored below.

Finally, we expected that the Mid-Life Transition, if it occurred at all, would be milder for these men than for civilians. Such is not apparently the case. For the six men who experienced such a transition, the phase was a wrenching one. More often than not, the transition was triggered by failure in some cherished aspect of the officer's

career goals. As a result, it was especially intense, since the support system provided by the career was withdrawn at a crucial point. Most of these officers relied on their families to help them through this stage in their lives, and they reported that their marriages were stronger as a result. The fact that the Mid-Life Transition occurs even in this highly structured context, with a group of men conditioned to success and achievement, is powerful support for the adult development theories.

B. GENERALIZATIONS

Several generalizations about the life/career/family cycle interaction can be drawn from this sample of officers. The first is that as a group, these men appear to defer some of the major life commitments. Only one of the Ensigns was married (another reported he would be within six months). Most reported that they intended to get married somewhere in the late twenties. They may also be deferring their children. Many of the Lieutenant Commanders had infants (five of the 14 children were 24 months or less). One officer reported he and his wife had made a conscious decision to defer their children until their career was somewhat more stable.

Although children have been deferred, wives do not necessarily pursue careers. Although they may work, there appears to be little concern for the wife's career. She has adopted a subordinate role in a more traditional pattern

than is probably current in the society at large. There is undoubtedly a selection process going on here. One Ensign reported that he would look for a wife who would fit the mold of "Navy wife."

The intensity of focus on the career leaves the Naval officer unprepared for other pursuits or means of satisfaction. His single-minded devotion to fulfilling the various career prerequisites would seem to leave the average Naval officer with few resources as he ages. If the officer does not for some reason select for command, or after he has achieved his command, he is left with a problem of what to do with the rest of his life. As one of the Captains said of leaving command, "It was a crushing experience." The Captains turned to their families and found sustenance.

None of the early or mid-career officers anticipated their lives would change significantly between forty and fifty. Yet most of the Captains had experienced such a change. One wonders if the relatively late-established family structure the Ensigns and Lieutenant Commanders have created is sufficient to sustain them in a Mid-Life Transition.

The compression inherent in the Navy career implies that the post-command officer should be a generative person. He is in a senior leadership position within the Navy and should be able to provide guidance to those following him.

He should be a creative and productive member of the organization. The Captains indicated that this was not fully the case. Following command experiences they were at a loss, frequently for a considerable period of time, before they could become productive. The post-command officer, then, may not be ready to be generative. There is enough evidence to suggest that leaving command is sufficient to spark a Mid-Life Transition if it has not yet occurred. If this is the case, then the officer is not ready to take on the responsibilities implicit in his seniority. Further, the uncertainties of the post-command environment and the lack of clear-cut career goals may make the Mid-Life Transition and the achievement of generativity harder.

The difficulties of attaining generativity may be a reason for the lack of mentoring experience that the Ensigns and Lieutenant Commanders reported. If this is the case, the organization and its members are both losers. The younger members do not receive the benefit of the experience of the older members, and the organization loses the richness and the wisdom that it might legitimately expect to see result from its efforts to create experienced people.

In summary, then, what is the picture like for the interaction between the life cycle and the career cycle? The life cycle goes on regardless of the Navy. The phases of adult life still occur, and at approximately the same times as for the civilians Levinson based his theory on.

It appears that the demands of the Navy's surface line officer career cause some events, especially in the family cycle, to be deferred. Marriage and children both appear to be somewhat later than the theorists would say. (Verification of this observation requires statistical survey beyond the scope of this essay.) The intensity of commitment required to succeed in the Navy creates a narrow focus for its participants. They do not necessarily feel this narrowness. As a result, the Mid-Life Transition, rather than being less intense because of the structure of the career, is perhaps somewhat more intense although outward manifestations of it may be less than those found in the civilian world.

For the surface line officers, the end of the various department head tours and the age thirty transition roughly coincide. By this time in fact most of the Lieutenant Commanders had pretty well established what their special talents were and were looking forward to getting on with the next hurdle in their careers--the Executive Officer tour. This tour and the ones immediately preceding it happen in the long thirties decade in which the officer is building toward success. The Lieutenant Commander is at just that point. He has been granted tenure in the organization and is a full-fledged member. He has a fair chance of fulfilling a Dream that includes command at sea. Almost all the Lieutenant Commanders were committed to at

least a twenty-year career--men who had decided the Navy was not their field had excluded themselves before they could be sampled here.

For the Ensigns, the initial sea tours and their induction into the Navy's qualification system coincide with their entry into the adult world. Most of the Ensigns seemed to think of these experiences as part of the Search phase of their careers. They did not feel committed to the Navy as a career and they had a limited time commitment for the Navy to prove itself to them. The important thing to note is that for the Ensigns the Navy and the surface line was one of several options that they could pursue. The only distinctive difference between the Navy and the civilian world is that the Navy requires a longer initial service contract. Where one could, conceivably, walk out the door if he became tired of IBM, that is not a live option in the Navy.

V. POLICY IMPLICATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

There are three broad areas for discussion: first, the definition of success from the point of view of the individual and the organization; second, career and life cycle interaction implications; and third, career choice implications and recommendations.

A. DEFINING SUCCESS

One of the fundamental facts that emerges from the life cycle/adult development theories is that a person's definition of what constitutes success varies over time. Levinson points out that the content of a man's Dream changes as he ages. This study found that Captains, Lieutenant Commanders, and Ensigns each had different ideas of what constitutes success for them. For the surface line officer, however, career success has only one dimension--command at sea. In part of course, this is because that is the goal that fills the organization's need. The Navy needs people to command its ships. In a 600-ship Navy, given two-year command tours, there is a need for 300 officers a year (not all, however, are surface line officers). Because of the importance of the position, the organization legitimately wants to make sure that only the best are chosen. The way this choice is made is

through an extensive training period and a number of formal selection boards, coupled with written and practical examinations. Given the nature of the system, for every four Lieutenants, only one will ultimately command.

A fair question, however, is whether this kind of competitive environment is the best available for selection of potential commanders at sea, or does it simply select those who are best able to compete? The data from the Captains in the survey would indicate that multiple definitions of success and multiple paths to success are feasible, even desirable. It seems logical that a man who is following his own direction to a success that is valuable to him and to the organization will be a more productive and more contented member of the organization.

The Ensigns interviewed for this paper were quite clear on career goals for the next five years, after that their views were hazy. Commanders report a lack of clear definition of goals and career aspirations after their command tours. It appears that counselling is deficient at both ends of the spectrum.

Recommendations:

A1. Since the definition of success varies over time, adopt a personnel management system that recognizes these varying definitions and uses them to direct people in the system. In so doing, there will emerge multiple definitions of success and multiple paths to attaining it. Because the

Navy is what it is, there will undoubtedly still be enough candidates to fill command at sea positions. But because there will be a multiplicity of definitions and paths to success there should be more people available to fill senior non-command positions. Assuming that the purpose of the screening system is to assure qualification for command (rather than simply rejection of potential applicants), there should not be a problem in maintaining at least the present level of competence.

A2. Improve career counselling for very junior and senior officers. This career counselling should include a battery of instruments to allow the officer to evaluate his specific strengths and weaknesses so that he can make an informed decision about how he wants to direct his career.

B. CAREERS AND THE LIFE CYCLE

The career and the life cycle undoubtedly interact. In the Ensigns interviewed for this paper, a surprising number indicated that they would defer marriage. Many of the Lieutenant Commanders had deferred children. These decisions reflect both the compression and the intensity of the Navy career. By their actions, these men reflect a conclusion that there isn't time to raise a family properly given the demands of sea duty, family separation, and rapid rotation. The men interviewed for this essay did not indicate that this

was a problem, but it should be noted that they are either at the beginning or have completely committed themselves to their careers. Officers nearer normal departure points (for example, expiration of obligated service) might well indicate more intense interactions.

Because of the compression and rigidity of the career pattern it appeared to the interviewer that there was a distinct type of Naval officer, especially in the middle grades. This kind of "breeding to type" stifles creativity and adaptation to change. Ultimately it is not in the organization's best interest.

It appears that one of the major interactions of the career and life cycle is to bring on the onset of the Mid-Life Transition. The post-command officer's twenty years of training in how to run and fight ships at sea is suddenly of limited value when he is faced with life after command. Previous training has not prepared him for what could be the most rewarding, creative, and generative years. In part this phenomenon is a result of the compression inherent in the Navy career; in part a function of the narrow definition of success.

Recommendation:

B1. Decompress the Navy career. The single most effective way to accomplish this goal is to move the command tour to a point beyond the 18 to 19 year point it now occupies. This change would give the individual officer more time

to develop within his own life cycle--time to start and raise the family most men want, for example. In addition he would have the time to develop skills and interests besides those necessary to achieve command. Moving the command tour would tend to keep more officers in the service beyond the twenty-year point, easing problems of shortages in manning at senior levels. Finally, and most significantly, moving the command tour to a time when most men are beyond their Mid-Life Transition would make it more likely that generative men are in command of the Navy's ships. The interaction between the fully generative older man and his younger officers should improve the performance of both. The younger officer would have the opportunity to establish a mentoring relationship and thereby be more productive during the course of his career. The more senior officer would find needs for nurturing fulfilled.

C. CAREER CHOICES

Most of the officers interviewed had a clear conception of when they would have to make certain key decisions about their careers. The decision points are not well-defined now in the Navy's career pattern. However, it would seem reasonable to build in choice points in the career system, especially if multiple paths to success are to be available. The present lock-step to command is destructive to the men involved and stultifying to the organization. Provision

of points at which the individual officer can make a decision to pursue other goals would tend to formalize multiple paths and also require a certain amount of commitment from the officer concerned.

Recommendations:

C1. Provide clearly defined choice points for officers in their careers. Tie these points to events, for example, completion of obligated service, end of department head tour, and so on. Make explicit the demands likely to be encountered on each path.

C2. As a matter of equity, provide pension vesting rights at the Lieutenant Commander selection point. This would enable some of these officers to make their decisions about staying in the service less dependent on their concern for pension rights. This is the career point both the Ensigns and the Lieutenant Commanders indicated was the most crucial for commitment to a twenty-year career. Providing a significant marker of maturity and acceptance in the organization at this point will tend to reinforce the career decision.

C3. Continue the twenty-year retirement option, but encourage longer careers. The longer career would give the service the benefit of the generative man, and tend to help decompress the career path for those who intend to command at sea. The twenty-year retirement is a valid, valuable option for the officer who wants to change careers

at mid-life. Giving the option of leaving will help ensure that only those who truly want to command or to continue in their careers will in fact do so.

D. SUMMARY

The policy implications and recommendations outlined above are not exhaustive. Further studies of the interaction of the life cycle and the career cycle will undoubtedly uncover other areas of career planning that might need adjustment. Interesting questions can be raised about other warfare specialties. For example, is the low retention rate for nuclear submariners a function of severe mismatch of career and life cycle requirements, not just a function of nearly incredible family separation?

The life cycles and patterns for blue collar workers have not been as extensively studied as those for white collar workers. Levinson indicates that there are specific problems associated with these lives that the Navy might profitably explore with respect to enlisted career patterns. In particular the ability to grow and mature in the decade of the thirties seems to be especially difficult for the civilian blue collar worker. There may be potential for the Navy to emphasize growth and advancement opportunities for this audience.

The late twentieth century promises to be a time of decreasing availability of manpower to man ships and

aircraft. The Navy has taken steps to use women to help fill the gap created by the relative scarcity of eligible men. This study suggests that career management practices that fulfill the members' needs may well be an additional means of attaining adequate personnel levels. Transition to a more flexible and human-centered approach will be difficult. However, the potential gains in terms of productivity, commitment, and lessened turbulence are worth the cost.

APPENDIX A

SURVEY INSTRUMENT FOR JUNIOR OFFICERS

Career and Personal Data Date_____

Name_____Rank_____

Birthdate/Age_____Marital status_____

Children_____

Assignment history

From	To	Unit

Education_____

Commissioning source_____

Years commissioned_____Time in grade_____

How long have you had the job you're in now?_____

_____

Do you feel that you know it well?_____

_____

What makes you feel that way?_____

_____

Do you and your immediate superior get along?_____

_____

How would you change the relationship?_____

_____

How would you characterize your relationship with officers of your rank here?

_____

_____

Do you think your peers are supportive, competitive, or what?

_____

_____

What were the "mickey mouse" jobs you had to do when you first came here?

_____

_____

How did you feel about them?_____

_____

Do you feel you need to do anything differently if your career is to progress?

_____

_____

Do you feel committed to the Navy as a career?_____

_____

Are you doing what you want to be doing?_____

_____

How specialized do you want to become?_____

_____

Do you sometimes feel that more junior officers know more about technical matters than you do?

_____

_____

How do you feel about that?_____

_____

How do you see your career at this point--are you still climbing, levelling off, or what?

_____

_____

If you are seeking new options, how would you characterize them?

_____

_____

Do you think you have succeeded or failed in your assignment?

_____

_____

Concerning your performance, which is more important to you--your own evaluation or that of others?

_____

_____

Do you think your work takes too much time from your family?

Is this the only conflict between your work and your family?

Do you rely on a more senior officer for advice and guidance?

Are you such an officer?

How would you characterize this relationship?

Will you continue this relationship after you leave here?

What do you find most motivating in your career?

Where would you say your talents lie?

What are the implications of this?

Would you characterize yourself as concerned more with the Navy's welfare or your own?

Do you feel there is more or less politics in the Navy now?

When did you move out of your parents' house?

Is your relationship with your parents close?

How has your parents' lives affected yours?

When did you get married?

Do you feel you have established your own home and family? Is this important to you?

In your marriage, who makes the decisions about where you will live, how you will live, and so on?

Who manages the money in your house?

Are your children all at home?

What difference in your life has their leaving made/will it make?

Do you and your wife share child-rearing duties?_____

_____

How was that decided?_____

_____

How do you set limits for your children?_____

_____

Who does the enforcement?_____

_____

Are you involved in civic, church, or social groups?_____

_____

Would you like to be more or less involved?_____

_____

Are you getting more satisfaction from hobbies, family, social and communities than previously?

_____

_____

Is this a change? What caused it?_____

_____

What is the most important thing for you to accomplish in the next five years of your career?

_____

_____

What is the most important thing for you to accomplish in the next five years in your personal life?

_____

_____

What would you like to be doing at age 40? at age 50?

Will you make it?

Are you doing now what you thought you'd be doing?

What are the differences and are they important to you?

Would you change anything that's happened to you in the last 5 years? last 10 years?

What would that be? How would your life be different?

APPENDIX B

SURVEY INSTRUMENT FOR SENIOR OFFICERS

Part I. Objective Career and Personal Data

Name_____Rank_____

Birthdate/age_____Marital status_____

Children_____

Service specialty_____

Assignment history_____

_____

_____

Service schools attended_____

_____

Postgraduate education/field_____

_____

Part II. Subjective Career Data

When you were commissioned did you make a decision to make the Navy a career at the same time?

_____

_____

When did you make your career decision?_____

_____

What influenced you to make the decision--desire to serve, security, etc.?

_____

Did you have a goal for your career?_____

_____

Have you achieved it? And if not is it important?_____

_____

What has been your most satisfying assignment?_____

_____

What characteristics made it most satisfying?_____

_____

What has been your least satisfying assignment?_____

_____

What characteristics made it least satisfying?_____

_____

What would you define as your highest professional achievement?

_____

What characteristics made it so?_____

_____

What do you like about your present job?_____

_____

What do you dislike?_____

_____

Is your present job what you thought you would be doing at this time in your life?

_____

What did you think you would be doing, if everything had turned out as you hoped?

_____

(If there is a difference) Is the difference important to you?

_____

Part III. Mentor Relationships

Have you formed any lasting friendships with older/more senior officers?

_____

At what point? How long did it last?_____

_____

Do you still have the relationship?_____

_____

What caused the end of the relationship?_____

_____

Do you have anyone you can call up or visit with for career or personal advice?

_____

Does anyone call on you for advice on career or personal life?

_____

Are there any people whose careers you follow closely?_____

_____

Have you ever tried to influence another officer's assignment? How?

_____

What was the result?_____

_____

Part IV. Retirement

When do you plan to retire?_____

_____

What do you plan to do then?_____

_____

Is this a significant change? In what ways?_____

_____

What do you expect will be most satisfying about your next job?

_____

What do you expect will be least satisfying?_____

_____

How would you characterize your feelings about this change?

_____

Part V. General

Do you perceive that you have had a mid-life crisis?_____

_____

If so, what form has it taken?_____

_____

Did your father have a similar stage in his life?_____

_____

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